

Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement, and how it can be replicated.

STRAIGHT (*ST*udents *R*esponding *A*rtistically and *I*ntimately to *G*enocide, the *H*olocaust, and *T*otalitarianism) allows students to explore, examine, and react to the Holocaust in a wide variety of artistic views. First, students are exposed to the Holocaust with a multi-sensory approach. Students explore Holocaust literature, Anti-Semitic propaganda of the period, *realia* such as documents and photographs from the Nazi Era, visual presentations, including art work by Holocaust victims and survivors, audio materials including the oral recollections of Holocaust Survivors.

After this extensive and many-faceted exposure to the Holocaust, students create, both independently and collaboratively, a variety of multi-sensory responses to the Holocaust. Supervisors and teachers of other disciplines offer their services as guest facilitators. For example, the humanities supervisor exposed the students to the haiku form of poetry and helped them prepare a haiku response to the Holocaust. An art teacher helped the students grasp the depth of the Holocaust artwork of David Olere, a death camp survivor. Additionally, the world language teachers have been recruited to explain the Holocaust from the French, Italian, and Spanish perspectives. Ultimately, the students' responses include, but are not limited to, poetry, music, visual art, role-playing, and dramatic presentations.

Finally, each student chooses one personal response to serve as a **Legacy** to share with younger students. This Legacy contains the student's personal choice of his/her finest artistic creation that will be passed on to successive classes of students. Last year, for example, one student left as her legacy a recollection of a Holocaust survivor. Another student left a postcard from the Holocaust Memorial Museum showing a pile of shoes from Holocaust victims. Yet another wrote this poetic response to David Olere's picture, "The Oven Room":

"The tepid smoke billows, forms
Sweaty clouds, and circles my hands.
They are worn from shoveling the dead."

Listed Objectives Students will:

1. Demonstrate an awareness of the major political, social, and economic factors which led to the Holocaust;
2. Understand, evaluate, and interpret the wide range of literature of the Holocaust;
3. Understand, evaluate, and interpret the art, music, and other artistic forms of the Holocaust;
4. Create their personal responses to the Holocaust using a variety of artistic and multi-sensory approaches;
5. Understand the significance of the Holocaust within its historic context and in contemporary society;
6. Work cooperatively with others to accomplish a task;
7. Evaluate their personal actions and accomplishments;
8. Demonstrate the willingness to pass on and share personal accomplishments;
9. Provide constructive criticism;
10. Use knowledge gained of the Holocaust to promote respect for people of different religions, races, and genders.

Innovation, Achievement, and Reproducibility

First, students' exposure to the Holocaust significantly transcends the text-driven curriculum often found in traditional English and social studies courses. Students are able to experience the scope of the Holocaust using a variety of senses. Second, the sheer vastness and enormity of the Holocaust are often overwhelming and incomprehensible to many middle school students. By allowing and encouraging students to respond to the Holocaust in a multisensory manner, they are better able to acquire ownership of aspects of the Holocaust, which they consider significant and worthy of learning. Third, the Legacy component allows the student the opportunity to pass on his/her new knowledge to younger students. Having experienced the Holocaust in this multi-sensory approach, students are better prepared to recognize and combat contemporary examples of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism.

Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the Core Curriculum Content and/or Workplace Readiness Standards addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard.

“The latter half of the 20th century reads like a hit list of destruction,” said Joan Ringelheim, director of education and oral history at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, at a recent conference. “The 20th century has a history of violence second to none.” At a time in their lives when students are exposed to an increasingly violent world—Ms Ringelheim cites 250 wars around the war between 1990-96—they are becoming increasingly ignorant of the enormity of the Holocaust. This practice provides middle school students with the opportunity to comprehend the Holocaust using a multi-sensory approach. With this newly gained knowledge, students are able to create a Legacy in which they pass on and share their knowledge with younger students. Additionally, with this newly gained knowledge, students are able to recognize and combat contemporary cases of anti-Semitism and other forms of racism.

Three major areas of the **Core Curriculum Content Standards** are addressed by this project. They are **Language Arts Literacy**, and **Social Studies**, and **Visual and performing Arts**. This project addresses five of the **Language Arts Literacy Standards**: 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, which are outlined below. Students will use both textual and non-textual materials to acquire a body of knowledge on the Holocaust. With this newly acquired knowledge and understanding, they will be able to speak, listen, and share with others the events of the Holocaust. Additionally, they will be able to present their responses to the Holocaust in a wide variety of written forms.

Drawing from the standards in **Social Studies**, this practice provides students with the opportunity to gain a deeper insight into the historical, political, economic, and societal forces that led to the Holocaust. Additionally, the Social Studies standards serve the students’ exploration of the humanities by examining literature, art, history, philosophy, and related fields. Students also benefit in developing **Visual and Performing Arts** skills by utilizing arts elements and arts media to create personal responses to the Holocaust. This is especially useful in the **Legacy** aspect of this project where students pass on a significant Holocaust experience to younger students.

Core Curriculum Content

Language Arts Literacy:

- 3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.
- 3.2 All students will listen actively in a variety of situations to information from a variety of sources.
- 3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.
- 3.4 All students will read a variety of materials and texts with comprehension and critical analysis.
- 3.5 All students will view, understand, and use contextual visual information.

Social Studies:

- 6.2 All students will learn democratic citizenship through the humanities, by studying literature, art, history and philosophy, and related fields.
- 6.3 All students will acquire historical understanding of political and diplomatic ideas, forces, and institutions throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- 6.4 All students will acquire historical understanding of societal ideas and forces throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- 6.6 All students will acquire historical understanding of economic forces, ideas, and institutions throughout the history of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.

Visual and Performing Arts:

- 1.3 All students will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performances.

Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objectives of the practice have been met.

Assessment:

Because of the multi-sensory approach of this practice, students are assessed using a variety of ways. Each student's evaluation is tailored, to some extent, to the form and content of his or her work. Students are graded on their ability to do the following:

1. Speak before a group to express thought and ideas and to convey an opinion about the Holocaust
2. Listen attentively and critically to a variety of speakers on the Holocaust.
3. Recognize propaganda and persuasive techniques used during the Holocaust.
4. Write on selected topics on the Holocaust in a variety of literary forms.
5. Synthesize information from multiple sources on the Holocaust.
6. Read independently a variety of literature on the Holocaust.
7. Use prior knowledge of the Holocaust to extend reading ability and comprehension and to link aspects of the text with experiences and people in their own lives.
8. Demonstrate the ability to gain information on the Holocaust from a variety of media.
9. Articulate Holocaust information conveyed by symbols.
10. Use symbols, drawings, and illustrations to represent information that supports and/or enhances Holocaust writing.
11. Articulate the connection between visual and verbal message in Holocaust studies.
12. Integrate multiple forms of media into a finished product, especially the **Legacy**.
13. Demonstrate knowledge of the historical, political, societal, economic, and cultural forces that contributed to the Holocaust.
14. Utilize arts elements and arts media to further knowledge of the Holocaust.

The end result of this project is that each student has developed an increased awareness of the Holocaust, and each student has demonstrated the ability to explore the Holocaust from a wide variety of approaches. Students made brief speeches to their peers in which they detailed one personally significant aspect of the Holocaust. In addition, they formed "Sharing Squares" of four students in which they spoke, listened, and shared Holocaust material. In their Holocaust Portfolio, students compiled a series of responses to selected topics of the Holocaust. They viewed and analyzed the propaganda techniques used by the Nazis to assume power and to propagate the Holocaust. They viewed, analyzed, and responded to the art and photographs of the Holocaust. Many students utilized the technology of the Internet to access and share countless articles, documents, and graphics on the Holocaust. Lastly, they prepared their **Legacy** of Holocaust knowledge to share with a younger generation of students.

Additionally, students demonstrated their attachment to the Holocaust in a number of highly personalized ways. One student accompanied her mother on a bus trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The ride home gave them ample time to share the experience. Another student brought in personal photographs of a concentration camp taken while on a family trip to her parents' native Poland. Yet another student left this poignant poem on Anne Frank as her **Legacy**:

Like a caged bird
Innocent, free spirit
A life cut short.